



New York Field Office

Environmental Contaminants Update

Congressional District 26

Hudson River PCBs Superfund Site:

The General Electric Company (GE) is the major source of the PCBs in the Hudson River. GE discharged up to 1.3 million pounds of PCBs to the River between the 1940s and 1977 from its electrical capacitor manufacturing facilities in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, New York. PCB discharges of contaminated groundwater continue to this day. PCBs are a hazardous substance under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). CERCLA creates a two-pronged approach for dealing with hazardous substances.

- Under the first prong -- Response Actions -- the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted, in 2002, a plan for the cleanup of the Hudson River Superfund site. The remedial program entails removal of an estimated 150,000 pounds of PCBs from some of the most contaminated portions of the river. The FWS is prepared to support the EPA to successfully implement the remedy and minimize impacts to natural resources.
- Under the second prong -- Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) -- the Trustees, consisting of New York State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Department of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service), have, since 1997, been jointly assessing injuries to natural resources from the PCB contamination of the Hudson River. The Trustees are moving forward to complete an Assessment Plan, with issuance of that Plan anticipated in early 2002. Studies, including a Fish Health Survey and Avian Preliminary Investigations, are in progress as part of the NRDA.

Conrail Diesel Fuel Oil Spill:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service) and New York State have settled with the Responsible Parties (RPs) -- Conrail Consolidated Rail Corporation and Pennsylvania Rail LLC -- for natural resource damages resulting from a spill of an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 gallons of diesel fuel into Cayuga Inlet in West Danby, Tompkins County, New York, on

November 3, 1997. The spill, as a result of derailment of a Conrail locomotive, caused a major fish kill in Cayuga Inlet, and also killed other wildlife. The settlement requires the RPs to reimburse the Trustees' assessment costs and fund three restoration projects: 1,000 linear feet of streambank protection on Cayuga Inlet; acquisition and release of 10 river otters by New York River Otter Project, Inc.; and purchase and stocking of 3,000 catchable-size brown trout in streams in Tompkins County, New York. These projects will compensate for injuries to fish and wildlife and their habitats as a result of the oil spill, including compensating for lost fishing opportunity in Cayuga Inlet.